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Con O. Lee

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What's The Matter With Florida?

BY
CON O. LEE, PH. D.

AUTHOR OF
"CHRONICLES OF COMPANY A"
"WHAT WE ARE AND WHY"
"A MAN'S ENEMIES", Etc.

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Price: Twenty-Five Cents

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T A M P A, F L O R I D A

WHILE preparing my books for publication, in response to many inquiries, I will deliver a limited number of lectures to Chambers of Commerce, Civic Organizations, Parent Teachers Associations, and Commercial Institutions that are worthy of approval.

This offer applies to the entire South and is not confined to the State of Florida.

Rates on application.

Address all communications to me personally.

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Tampa, Florida.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH FLORIDA?

By

CON O. LEE, Ph. D.

Author of

"CHRONICLES OF COMPANY 'A'," "TIP TOP TAMPA,"
"WHAT WE ARE AND WHY," ETC.

Dedicated to the honest citizens of the orange blossom
State who never bought any real estate on margins at
inflated prices in the hope of selling to other honest
citizens on greater margins at more inflated prices.

Fin. Acc.

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Florida, Yesterday and Today



THE PERSONAL viewpoint is, after all, the thing that really determines everything. Or, as has been remarked from the times of Aristotle down to James Harvey Robinson, what happens is not one-tenth so important as how you regard it.

So, by this standard Florida was, last year, several laps ahead of Andy Gump's Paradise Vista. Today it resembles a twelve months old bird's nest.

"But yesterday, the word of Caesar might have stood against the world.
Now none so poor to do him reverence."

We know that nothing happens in this world or anywhere else by accident. Everything is caused by something before and in turn will cause some other things.

So let us look into the causes of Florida's last year's prosperity, or what masqueraded as such—and into her present failure—if such it may be called. Now grit your teeth.

Get ready for some shocks. I am going to tell the truth in this booklet regardless of who gets slammed.

And I am inspired by the sincerest of motives.

Returning lately from a six month's sojourn in Northern cities I have found out a great deal, most of which is true.

Since coming back to Florida I have looked around, I have observed things, I have a new perspective, I have talked with people and I now have the answer.

1. Folks in Florida, first of all, you have let some crooks into your selected circles. You have taken their money in forms of newspaper advertising, donations to Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, etc. You have practically given them a license to lie and steal and they have done their extremest in these regards.

And let us begin right here in Tampa. Not because it was the only place, for it was not, let us consider OLDSMAR.

Here was a spot, geographically unadapted to anything unless it might be a tadpole nursery, that was first exploited as a farm community, and a dairy center, an industrial community, where tractors and grove heaters were manufactured, then as a subdivision de looks (?) (everyone looking for a sucker to buy a lot there) and finally has become the only thing it was ever destined to become—the remains of a gigantic swindle.

That the developer of Oldsmar is now out of the State and had his license taken away is to your credit, citizens of Florida. You had to do it to preserve your own self respect. But why did not you listen to the writer and to half a dozen others when they told you years ago of the direction in which you were headed?

Last winter I was in Daytona and DeLand. I saw the awful overflow swamps being offered for sale by the erstwhile developer of OLDSMAR, and could not help thinking of what would the aftermath be?

You have said by the decisions of your own courts that this man is unfit ever to hold a license in your State.

Was it necessary for the Supreme Court to tell you this?

Didn't you in your heart and soul know all along what he was, and what he was doing?

Yet he was on the Governor's staff. I do not hold Governor Martin to blame because I think he is one of the most constructive forces Florida has ever had for good, but he evidently acted on the recommendation of another. It is this other that I blame.

A few years ago, after a return from California, I found a concern here endeavoring to put on a gigantic swindle similar to one that had done millions of dollars of grief in Los Angeles. The Secretary of the Board of Trade and the Secretary of the Realtors were the only ones who supported me in the least.

However, in spite of all pressure brought to bear on me, with the help of these two men I did put the attempted swindle, for it was nothing else, completely out of business.

So then, my friends, the first cause of your downfall was the permitting of all kinds of propositions to be put over by irresponsibles who only had to be able to pay office rent and advertising bills to sell anything for which a bill of sale or a deed could be printed.

There were people ready to tell you of all these things. But you would not listen. Now you cannot still your ears. Listen well at this time and get it all over with, for I will give you the remedy as well as the diagnosis.

2. As a result of this permitting all kinds of wildcat speculation to go on you have had from Key West to Pensacola four hundred and seventeen kinds of absolutely unnecessary and impossible developments, some made in ignorance, but most with malice aforethought and engineered by men who had no ability whatever except to take money from the unsuspecting public.

Can you in your wildest dreams think of any logical reason for "INTER-OCEAN CITY" or for "ARCADIA GARDENS?"

The developer of the last named begged me to go with him as a lecturer and offered what was considered a fair recompense. My answer to him was

that he was knocking on the jail doors and trying to break into the penitentiary with a crowbar.

Couldn't you folks have prevented these awful foul spots on the fair name of Florida?

Shouldn't you have prevented them?

Will you tell me why you didn't prevent them?

Or, shall I tell you?

All right, then. You simply didn't care. They weren't hurting you, your properties were honestly managed, they were paying their bills, their publicity agents were good fellows, and if any hicks from Iowa or Ohio got stung, you should worry!

You are worrying now though, aren't you?

I once heard a story of a farmer up in New York State who bought 100 bushels of oats from another farmer. He thought they were tampered with and on sifting them he found forty bushels of sand in them. He had the swindler arrested and promptly convicted by a jury of his moral superiors. The defendant was sentenced to a year in jail. He sat there crying as the jury went out. One old jurymen paused and glancing with contempt, remarked: "Why didn't ye cry when ye was young, hey! I say, why didn't ye cry when ye was young?"

I may say the same thing to you folks.

"From the past doth the present eternally spring,
You may sow what you will, but tomorrow will bring
You the harvest to show you the manner of thing
Is the seed you have chosen to sow!"

You can't gather oranges from guava bushes, and thoughts are things and just as true to parent type.

So other things happened.

Other organizations, bigger but not necessarily better than those heretofore mentioned, started larger campaigns. These were the new city builders.

From one end of the State to another they were opening. Some were supposedly dedicated to developing industries.

They had great ideas.

According to these Napoleons the entire United States was going to move into Florida in the next year or two, in spite of the fact that there were enough lots sold out in California within a few years back to hold every man, woman, child, dog and goldfish that will be born in the United States for another century.

This hurt.

Particularly did it hurt a city like Tampa, that has every good reason to become a great city, a wonder city at that.

And how did it hurt?

Because you all rushed in to get yours while the getting was good and hoped to unload and make a nice profit as the salesman told you could be done.

If you didn't, then stop me on the street when you see me and shake hands with me. I want to meet you.

Did I get stung?

I'll let you judge for yourself.

A year ago the Mrs. said she was anxious for a house. The last two had been sold while we were tenants and rents raised a couple of hundred per cent.

I was making money last fall so we made a first payment on a house listed at \$11,000 and easily worth \$4,000 or \$4,500. I put in \$500 I had saved and \$2,000 that I borrowed. It was not my idea, but as a minority stockholder I was over-ruled.

Five days after taking possession the Mrs. was offered either \$2,000 or \$2,500 profit but could not see it as she said it would mean buying another house at the increased prices.

Today the only thing that saves us is that the Sheriff is working his foreclosing staff in eight-hour shifts, but is so far behind that he will hardly reach us before April with the necessary papers. We would deed the place back and take the loss but who wants to take back a \$4,000 house to satisfy an obligation of \$11,000 plus, signed by a sucker at the top of the inflation period?

And then there were hundreds of others.

3. Of course an infinite series of anything is impossible so this gradually accelerated motion in prices had to stop some time or other. And stop it did.

HERE'S HOW!

A owned a piece of property. It might have been a home, an ocean front lot, or a bit of acreage.

A sold it to B for far more more than A paid for it.

But A was smart, to hear him tell it a year ago.

He didn't want cash. Oh, no. That would be silly, because it would mean handing so much to the Government in income tax. So he "Part-Paymented" it. He took fifteen or twenty per cent down, balance in one, two, three and maybe four years. Mortgage to secure future payments at eight per cent. A commission to a broker, maybe. Thus the Government didn't get much if anything.

Now B is not coming across with his deferred coin. A is suffering with those "Second Payment Blues."

Worse than that!

A most likely owned the property only on a margin himself. He expected

with B's second payments to make his and keep a little overcharges for himself. In fact he was so sure of this that he took the first payment of fifteen per cent that he received and spread that over some more property, lots, acreage, Davis Island apartment house sites, or what not.

Now he has his former holdings coming back on him and can't pay his own indebtedness on either the old or the new obligations. In the language of the gambling table or the race track he is "Whipsawed," which means he is getting it coming and going.

And every man, woman and child in Florida is both A and B.

Last year the papers had full page advertisements by dozens of big firms advertising subdivisions, industrial sites, parks, midways.

This year there are advertisements of houses to rent and bargains to sell.

Last year there were busses to take you anywhere and everywhere with excellent free dinners served. You might have to listen to a bunch of hot air by a professional lecturer, and some high pressure salesman and closer would also take a shot at you. But you would get the dinner and the trip even if you didn't buy.

This year there are no busses.

All the subdivisions are needed to store the repossessed salesmen's automobiles which can be bought for extremely low prices. The salesmen let their cars go so that they might eat.

An advertiser in Orlando last year made a wise crack that foretold the mishappenings. Said he, when the "Florida Takes Inventory" bunch met at West Palm Beach last Spring The Great Evil is this—"OUR MARSH RABBITS ARE GETTING BALD HEADED BUTTING INTO SUBDIVISION STAKES!"

He was right.

Of course we are reaping where we sowed.

Last year you used to have to wait half an hour in a block long line to get your lunch at the Y. W. C. A. Now you can walk right in and be sitting at your table in a few minutes.

Last year you couldn't get an office for love or money. They were getting \$100 a month for little spaces five feet square in the lobby of the DeSoto Hotel. To think of office space on a main street was out of the question.

This year the circus posters in the empty building windows make the downtown main streets look like an unending board fence.

And then came the hurricane.

And then

4. somebody blundered and tried to lie about that, which brought on a controversy that made things ten times worse.

As I see it the hurricane did this.

It injured Florida most seriously in those sections of the United States

which think that all Florida is Miami and West Palm Beach, Palm Beach, Hollywood by the Sea and Coral Gables.

Florida has let the East Coast lead in its advertising. In the last few years St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Tampa and more recently Clearwater and Fort Myers have somewhat sounded their own charms and done some National advertising, but the main thought up North, especially in New York and the East, is to the effect that Miami and its environs were all of civilized Florida, that the rest were the Everglades.

Again the last year's boom was to blame for much of the material disaster in the storm, which in turn meant the loss of life incurred in the Magic City.

A lot of cheap builders went there last year to make money. Houses could be sold for enormous profits, and with the excuse of an embargo on freight, contractors and builders got away with murder.

Last year the lawyer wasn't able to take your case. He had gone out to look at some acreage a syndicate was getting ready to buy. Your family doctor was looking at the apartment house to be sure it would be ready for occupancy as contracted for and wouldn't be able to attend to Johnny's adenoids this season; your dentist was looking to see that the sidewalks were being laid down in his own private subdivision. Even the bell boys were matching deeds to Davis Island lots and did not heed your ring for ice water.

But things have changed today.

Says the doctor, "If you can sell my house that cost \$35,000 for \$10,000 I'll give you \$2,000 commission." Even a bootlegger recently complained to me that he had been obliged to do so much credit business that he was now carrying nearly five thousand dollars on his books and no chance to collect.

Another thing about the storm was this.

There are certain things that should be done in this part of the country.

California recognizes earthquakes, though it calls them fires, or more recently "tremblors," and it makes certain building laws.

It has been demonstrated that we have tropical disturbances in Florida now and again and that the best type of building to resist the blowing of a wind that is traveling 65 to 110 miles an hour is a stucco on brick or hollow tile and ONE STORY HIGH or low if you prefer. None of this style building was injured in Miami. But the little gingerbread, slapped together bungalow, held in position with the wall-paper just blew up like the real estate boom itself.

5. Now everyone is talking calamitously.

"You can't collect money with a shot-gun," said a man to me today. "Everybody owes everybody else. Nobody will buy anything."

To which the question naturally arises: "Did anyone really ever buy during the boom? Were there real fortunes made as stated in the papers and propaganda pamphlets?"

It all depends again as we said in the beginning upon your viewpoint. Last year a friend of mine quit a good job on a newspaper and as special correspondent and went to a place where there was a big boom in South Florida.

A few months later I met him.

"How did you make out down there?" I asked.

Here was his answer verbatim. "I made forty-seven thousand dollars in paper profits. If it is ever paid I will make that much. But in actual cash I haven't made a thing and had to borrow five dollars to get gas and oil to make the trip back to Tampa."

Again calling to attention a story of my youth illustrated with a cartoon.

A small boy with every appearance of corporal rotundity is crying intensely.

Nearby is an old gentleman offering kindly advice. "Don't cry my little man," he says. "Why, fat boys don't cry!"

"Aw, mister," sobs the kid, "this here ain't fat, it is BANANAS!"

The writer has lived in Florida for nearly twelve years, coming here as an agricultural writer from Chicago. He has seen much during his stay in the State, and last year's conditions were hectic to say the least.

There were syndicates (accent on the syn) formed every two minutes. Like many of the mail fraud swindles, the first investors received a profit and then they all came back for more.

People have fallen from the days when the serpent sold Eve an idea of getting in on the ground floor, and when Gabriel blows his trump there will be others to say, "Wait till I sign this application blank, and I'll be right along!"

It is so perfectly human to think we are smarter than other folks, to think that we can make ours and get away with it at the expense of those who will come after.

Wire tappers and gold brick gentlemen are still at their old game under another disguise. I look for the next skin game to be the cornering of air-plane landing stations with centrifugal revolving platforms. As I write my younger son tells me of a farmer who just today bought the Tampa courthouse for eleven hundred dollars, paying down two hundred and fifty. He only found out he was swindled when he went for his deed at three o'clock and it wasn't delivered.

Here is an idea pertaining to what has happened in Florida.

It is good psychology.

To do the one receiving it any good, money must be earned.

Stolen fruit may taste the sweetest but it is apt to give one a dreadful bellyache. And money made easily isn't going to last long, and particularly such money as was made in real estate trading last year.

Am I making myself plain?

Some visitors to the State lost money last year. They were the ones who

visited tourist centers chiefly and purchased subdivision and development (so called) properties.

BUT THE REAL ONES WHO LOST BIG SUMS ARE THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN FLORIDA TWELVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR, WHO HAVE ALL THEIR INTERESTS HERE, AND WHO ARE SUPPOSEDLY BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN OF MORE THAN AVERAGE INTELLIGENCE.

One man told me a few days ago he had put in fifteen thousand dollars and would take two thousand gladly to get out of further payments.

Another will let go a property supposedly worth twenty-two thousand for one thousand cash. In fact there are none who bought on the part payment plan who would not like to get out.

6. What will happen? Will the good old days return with busses and free dinners and high pressure salesmen in knickers and rainbow colored sweaters? Or will the State go broke?

I am not a banker.

Nor am I a financier. For this I am glad, because knowing nothing of these things I can give my imagination full play. And I will compare Florida to the antics of my eleven-year-old daughter, Ann.

This young lady has an appetite like the average four-months-old pup. She will eat anything that can be swallowed, green, ripe, raw, cooked, uncooked or burned, fresh or spoiled. Knowing nothing of balanced rations and caring less she frequently fills up, not wisely but too well.

Then after an orgy comes a period of depression. There is a headache, maybe a sore throat, perhaps intestinal disturbances. The Mrs. recognizes the symptoms. Also she has an infallible remedy.

Several of the family are called in to help. Ann is gently and firmly, and if not gently at least firmly, placed in a reclining position, her nose is held, and the contents of a two- or three-ounce phial of "Oleum Ricini" are poured down her open throat. When it is quite apparent that deglutition beyond the possibility of expectoration has occurred she is released and in a few hours nature has done as was designed and we hear Ann singing or notice her playing with the dog as usual.

Florida has stuffed.

Florida has eaten too much and of stuff that was absolutely indigestible, if not really poisonous.

The cathartic is about to be administered. It will be a painful but necessary process, and recovery barring absolutely unforeseen complications, should be rapid and complete without any danger of a relapse.

In fact Florida has manfully or womanfully begun the treatment.

The real estate license law, recognizing that crooks were operating in the

State, and patterned after the one of California was passed, tested and declared constitutional.

Men have been prosecuted under it and some of them denied licenses henceforth and forever, *per omnia saecula saeculorum*. So far, so good.

By the law of the survival of the fittest and the perishing of the most unfit, many operators, near operators, and nowise near operators have starved to death, or moved elsewhere.

Also the signs are not lacking to show that there are many more, who could well be spared, and who will also fold their tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away before the Thanksgiving cranberries are on sale. There will be no mourners.

So universal has been the distress among permanent residents that to ask anyone in Florida to buy real estate for years to come will be equivalent to inquiring of a native son in the middle of San Francisco's business center, "When do you expect the next big earthquake?"

Many of the various communities are now tearing down and holding bonfires of the signs that disfigured the highways during the big times of 1925.

But something must be done and done quickly and he is no friend of Florida who thinks otherwise or advises otherwise.

PROPERTY THAT CANNOT BE PAID FOR MUST BE RE-DEEDED OR AN EQUALLY EQUITABLE METHOD DEVISED OF DISTRIBUTING LOSSES, AND IF THIS IS NOT DONE THERE WILL BE A PANIC HERE IN THIS STATE THE LIKE WHEREOF NOBODY CAN IN HIS WILDEST THOUGHTS BEGIN TO IMAGINE!

Princes and Lords may flourish and may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath hath made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

In other words this financial disaster did not hit the big fellows except indirectly. And very indirectly at that. For the most part the banks here kept out of the wild hurrah, except for individual gamblers among them. The big bank failures here were simply correspondents for a discount company in Atlanta, Georgia, and nearly all of them have re-opened and practically all will soon re-open.

What will happen if something drastic and equitable is not done immediately if not sooner will be on a small scale what would have happened if the entire population of the United States had been rendered unable to make any payments on their Liberty bonds after their first payments.

It isn't as if only one big organization had been injured. Suppose a big public service corporation with millions of patrons had lost a few millions of dollars. It could raise the price of its commodity a half a cent and recover

the loss in a short time.

Not so in this instance. These folks have paid out all of their savings, and never expected to make a second payment, in fact were told that it would not be necessary. I have heard not one but many operators and salesmanagers tell their salesmen to give as a closing argument, "Mr. Jones our object is to make you make money. It is just a question of how much you want to make, that is all. You are not going to buy this property, but you are going to make a first payment and we will sell it for you at an advance in price long before your next payment becomes due. Mr. Smith made two thousand dollars last week on our Swampy Hollow subdivision, and you ought to do much better with this Quagmire Heights property, because it is on the Dixie Highway and within a quarter of a mile of the Tamiami trail, and on a railroad with the Skipskatoochoochee River flowing directly in the middle of the tract. Yes, just sign here and give me those Liberty Bonds, and I'll show you how to make some real money."

It was a little different buying improved property.

You had an agent get it for you.

He secured an option, and you paid ten per cent down, balance of cash down payment as soon as abstract and title papers could be prepared.

Frequently before papers were ready the owner had been offered more and he came to you with the excuse that his wife wouldn't sign the deed at that figure and then you were out of luck.

I had a friend who got into such a pickle.

He was mad clean through because he wanted to clean up that much extra money himself. So he put the contract on record, which clouded the title, and then brought suit for delivery of deed. Of course he withdrew it before trial and is blessing his lucky stars ever since, because, as he explains, the land would have come back on him sure enough and he would have lost both ways.

When Smith and Jones and Brown and Robinson have put up every cent on a margin, and sold their own property to do this, and cannot either keep up payments on the new property nor on the old one when it returns to them what will happen?

And what will be the mental attitude when a million of these folks in the confines of one State get talking of their hard times to two million tourists from the other forty-seven States, and how far will this mental attitude extend?

Physically Florida is the same, charming place of yore.

It has the same incomparable climate. Its tarpon, its bass, its golf links will claim the lovers of true sport as they always have.

Oranges and grapefruit will grow here and bring good prices to those who plant the standard varieties. Winter vegetables and strawberries will be raised here when the rest of the country is locked in the grip of winter.

Tourists will come down here. Bathing beaches will be patronized this

winter as in the past. Hotels and apartment houses will prove good investments.

But even all these sources of revenue will not suffice.

7. AND HERE IS WHY.

Our Deficiency Judgment Law

Take our own case as above stated.

We bought a \$4,000 house for \$11,000 and paid down \$2,500 and assumed mortgages for the balance.

Suppose the house is sold out under foreclosure proceedings. It will bring probably \$3,500 to \$4,000 and there are two mortgages against it aggregating \$8,500.

Say it brings \$4,000. Then under the laws of the sovereign commonwealth of Florida there is in existence against the wife of my bosom and myself, joint and separate deficiency judgment of \$4,500 plus costs of \$1,500 or at least a total of \$6,000 which will act as a permanent lien against any future ownership of real estate in the Orange Blossom State.

Can you imagine anyone going through an experience of this kind ever wanting to own any future real estate in Florida or within a thousand miles of it? If the next legislature will annul this law and make its annulment a constitutional amendment it will do much for the rehabilitation of Florida and the great disasters may not after all have been in vain. But the thought of losing going and coming and then being fined in perpetuity for being such an ass as to buy property within its confines will do more to keep people out of Florida than a dozen citrus freezes, real estate blowups and hurricanes. California, here I come!

And I am informed that this deficiency judgment persists in spite of the homestead and other exemptions, in other words no legal exemptions can be pleaded against it.

If, as the economists tell us, land is the basis of all values, then it can readily be seen how values of all things in Florida are surely going to suffer during the period of readjustment now under way.

That some fears are felt now is apparent from the fact that good first mortgage paper can be bought for fifty cents on the dollar. Mortgage and bank interest here in Florida means "EIGHT PER CENT," so the purchase of paper at fifty per cent off really means "SIXTEEN PER CENT" on your money and then you will merrily be told there is a "FIVE PER CENT" brokerage charge for the first year, so that there will be "TWENTY ONE PER CENT" for this year on safe investments for the shylocks, plus sixteen for subsequent years.

If you have saved a few millions come down here and reap the harvest.

8. There are many secondary results from the big boom of last year that

point to the grief that always follows easy times and easy money. For while things were at their height last year, all sorts of plans for widening of streets, extensions of paving, sewers, water mains and the like were contracted for and put in.

Under the system in vogue, at least here in Tampa, the city arranges for the paving contracts which are let under bond issues and then assessed pro rata against the properties affected. One gentleman told me a few days ago that he sold a piece of property some time ago agreeing to pay this assessment. He now finds that it is greatly in excess of his profits on the deal, and he will likely have to take the property back again. And as the inflated values also were considered in the new year tax schedule, he is in some valuable lessons as to when is a sale for profit not a sale for profit.

Amusing features occur when one thinks of the changed habits, conditions and occupations of last year's real estate men. The hatless, beknickered, besweated, salesmen, closer, high pressure boys, high-binders, burglars and coxeys, yes, even salesmanagers and bird dogs.

Gone are the days of easy coin. There is no "front" money at all. Advances are not to be considered. Last year your reputation might get you anything from a few hundred to five thousand advance for signing an exclusive contract with "Marshmallow Manor" for the season. This year you are told that you will get half your five per cent commission on the 17th of the month next following the payment of the check you bring in. How you live in the meanwhile does not interest your employers in the least. That is another promotion for you to take care of personally.

I found one salesmanager of last year working as a plasterer at \$7.00 a day and glad to have the job, in fact worrying whether he could keep so employed all winter. He traded a two thousand dollar note given him as commission to pay a grocery bill of two hundred dollars and the grocer may be out of luck at that for all he knows.

A developer who carried full pages last year is selling the art handwork of his wife. Another who was a salesmanager of the toniest of them all is selling second hand automobiles and considers himself lucky because he is able to figure on \$35 a week. Last year I know this man was stopping at a hotel where he was paying \$21 a day for himself, wife and child.

Clerks, canvassers and other occupations are filled with the gayly dressed boys of last fall. One humorist told me a few days ago, "Well, I get at least three orders a day at a profit of a dollar each. That means that I eat," and he is perhaps luckier than others.

So far I have not discovered, to be perfectly honest, any real cases of destitution and distress. Most of the boys have been game losers, or have gone elsewhere to hide their shame and dodge their creditors.

To return to the place I mentioned in the beginning of this article as typical

of the grief in Florida and why it happened let me narrate two incidents of this summer.

Once, in Chicago, a man stopped me on the street, that having been my old home town, he asked me what I thought of the chances of making money on Oldsmar property.

My reply was to will the income he would receive to his worst enemy and then watch him starve to death.

Again, in Cincinnati, a man spoke to me about a \$7,000 check that had been given a friend of his as purse money won by his horse at the OLDSMAR race track last spring. The check was a "crow" and had come back marked "Insufficient Funds." Knowing of many other similar checks held by local tradesmen in the vicinity of the track I could not give him any encouragement, in spite of Florida's drastic law on bum checks.

It is the accumulation of incidents like these through the North that makes Florida unpopular and does more than enough to offset the boosting of a dozen Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce.

9. Now, folks, this is perhaps enough for one dose.

I have gone generally into matters that I will treat of much more specifically shortly.

Florida has done wrong by Our Nell.

It is up to Florida then to plead guilty and ask for the mercy of the Court.

It was wrong to let wire tappers, swamp sellers, pine woods city planners and others sandbag our innocent tourists from way up North by selling them lots, acreage and syndicate interests beyond the saturation point.

They have howled!

The papers back home have taken up their cases and exaggerated them and only those of us who have made a trip North this summer can tell how the reaction has set in against Florida in many places that were formerly quite friendly.

We must realize that we made mistakes and not commit them any more. We must exercise supervision of salesmen and promoters and see that none but honest men sell Florida land in the future.

Two years ago I was in St. Petersburg when a "Better Business Bureau" or some such organization was being perfected by local interests and a nationally known high priced organizer was on hand to help put the idea over.

In the afternoon paper was a list of subscribers to the fund to install the bureau. A witty real estate salesman was sitting on a bench beside me glancing at the list over my shoulder.

"Well," he said, "I can keep that bureau busy for twenty-four hours a day for the next two years, working in eight hour shifts."

"And how?" I retorted.

"Easy," he came back. "Let it take up the just claims for commissions owed

real estate salesmen by these prominent citizens who have subscribed to the fund to establish the bureau."

And we both laughed, as did the crowd that surrounded us.

Because we all knew that it was absolutely true.

Florida is stepping off right in cleaning up its real estate mess.

OLDSMAR was only one of many. Others have blown up. Many more will blow up. Ought to be blown up. We need and will always need legitimate developments and such should also pay legitimate profits, but the days of the swindler are numbered. The only place we want him in Florida is in jail.

At this particular time it is a life saver for Florida that there are propositions, honest, worthy of support and encouragement and which promise excellent returns for the investor.

It has been the writer's privilege to examine some of these and to say a good word for them.

And among them he knows of nothing that is more worthy of his unqualified endorsement than the lots, business properties, and investments offered by Mr. J. W. Beach at Groveland, Lake County, Florida.

Mr. Beach is a man of ability and integrity who has spent fifteen years developing his holdings at Groveland and who is regarded with respect, admiration and love by every citizen in Groveland and Lake County. He sold out his holdings there some few years ago and was besought by the citizens to buy more so that they would have the advantage of his public spirited citizenship and sound business advice.

For more than fifteen years he has been selling small farms and grove properties in this section of the State of Florida to settlers from the North, West and East and every one of them is satisfied with his purchase. He has sold in this way more than twenty thousand acres. Lake County, where Groveland is located, is one of the leading citrus growing sections of the State. Its rolling land offers more protection for groves than is found elsewhere, and the County has 1400 named lakes, of which 32 are located on properties sold by Mr. Beach.

Mr. Beach also owns the finest kolin deposits in the State, if not in the entire world, but that is another story to be told later on.

Groveland is almost the exact center of Peninsular Florida, where the State aid road north and south crosses the State aid east and west highway.

The J. Ray Arnold Company has just opened its new lumber mill at Groveland, said to be the most modern mill in the entire South, with a capacity of 300,000 feet of lumber a day, working in two ten-hour shifts. I assure all my friends a square deal in all relations with Mr. J. W. Beach.

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